



Building Australia's Future:

Labor's Commitment to Women



A message from Anthony Albanese and Katy Gallagher

Labor has put social and economic equality for women at the heart of our agenda – delivering long overdue change in economic participation, representation and rights. We're clear there is more work to do – and we're ambitious for what we can deliver next.

Creating opportunity for women is in our national interest. It's more than a measure of fairness – it's a driver of our national success.

For Labor, equality for women is not an add on – it's at the centre of what we do. Equality for women grows our workforce, lifts our living standards, boosts productivity, and liberates the talent and capacity we need to build Australia's future. We have made a difference, but we know we have more work to do.

We've brought the gender pay gap to record lows, with women working full time earning \$217 more a week on average than they were three years ago. And we've reached record highs in women's workforce participation – creating over

half a million new jobs for women.

We've focussed on women's economic equality and security in our first term because we know that it is the foundation for freedom, opportunity and, most importantly, safety.

Gender equality cannot be achieved without ending gender-based violence. Every woman deserves to live in safety, free from the threat of violence and we are committed to our shared goal of ending gender-based violence in a generation.

There is more that must change – urgently – which is why we've made ending the crisis of gender-based violence a major priority for our Government and National Cabinet. Labor will continue to work every day to stop violence – working hand-in-hand with advocates and victim survivors to target perpetrators with early intervention to break cycles of violence.

Now is an important time to protect the progress we have made towards gender equality following a decade of neglect. We need to lock in our gains and protect against those who will wind women's progress back.

Building Australia's Future: Labor's Commitment to Women sets out what we have achieved together and our commitments for the future. It shows the scale of the work we've done and the ambition we have for women as we continue to build Australia's future.

The Albanese Labor Government is the first ever Federal Government with a majority of women and our Cabinet has equal numbers of women and men.

Achieving genuine equality requires everyone to be part of the solution and with a Labor Government you have a team that's 100% committed to building an equal future for all Australian women.

Ending gender-based violence.

Every woman deserves to live in safety, free from the threat of violence. This term, all state and territory governments along with the Commonwealth have set a shared goal to end gender-based violence in a generation. Achieving this ambitious but necessary goal demands action and change at every level of government and in every part of society.



Here's what we've done for women's safety

The Albanese Labor Government has made ending family, domestic and sexual violence a national priority since day one. We have invested record funding - over \$4 billion - on gender-based violence in our first term to accelerate action.

In our first term, we have focussed on stable, ongoing funding for frontline services, boosting financial support and housing options for women escaping violence, and delivering much needed law reform. Labor has:

- **Boosted support to frontline services doing the life-saving work of responding to violence** – Labor has delivered hundreds more frontline service workers and signed a new long-term \$700 million National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses that fixes the funding cliff left by the Morrison Government. We've also provided ongoing, increased funding for legal assistance services across the country, including specialist Women's Legal Service, Community Legal Centres and

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services under the new \$3.9 billion National Access to Justice Partnership starting in July 2025.

- **Increased financial support, so women don't have to choose between violence and poverty** – We've made 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave law; provided \$1.9 billion to extend the single parent payment – boosting the incomes of 100,000 single parents, mostly mums, by at least \$291.50 a fortnight over 3 years; and set up the permanent new Leaving Violence Program to provide up to \$5,000 payments, which will now be indexed, as well as provide important support services to people leaving intimate partner violence.
- **Invested in housing, so women know they have a place to go** – we've already built 33 new women's shelters and are investing nearly 20 times more in crisis and transitional accommodation than the former Liberal government.
- **Overhauled the family law system, so it's simpler and safer for those who've experienced family violence** – including removing the presumption of shared care in family law, and improving how financial abuse and the economic impacts of violence are considered.

Preventing violence against young women

The rate and severity of violence against young women is a serious concern.

Labor is working to address this with:

- Funding for evidence-based consent and respectful relationships education in schools.
- The national *Consent Can't Wait* and *Stop it at the Start* campaigns.

- Action to stop sexual assault on campus, including legislating a mandatory code for universities and the new National Student Ombudsman.
- Action to combat misogynistic content targeting children and young people, including banning deepfake pornography and stopping children under 16 using social media.
- A new online safety code to make dating apps safer.



And here's what's coming

It's clear there's much more to do. Labor will continue to invest and reform because we cannot be satisfied until the violence has stopped.

We will work hand-in-hand with the women's safety sector and victim survivors to evaluate, evolve and accelerate our efforts, starting early to consult with the sector to design and deliver the Second Action Plan under the National Plan.

In doing this, Labor will continue to sharpen our approach to stopping violence – focussing on intervention with men who use violence, and breaking cycles of violence for children and young people. We will embed safety in our Commonwealth systems and continue to strengthen our focus on preventing and responding to sexual violence.

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- **Intervene early and strengthen accountability and consequences for perpetrators** – we're investing \$85 million

in innovative and targeted approaches to identify and respond to high-risk perpetrators. We will trial world-leading new policing approaches that will treat high-risk domestic violence perpetrators like “fixated persons” – in a similar way to violent extremists and stalkers targeting high profile people. This will be accompanied by \$8.6 million in new funding to the Innovative Perpetrator Response program – for initiatives like electronic monitoring and ankle bracelets for high-risk perpetrators, and intensive behavioural change.

- **Take a coordinated approach to engaging men and boys in violence prevention** – building on our existing work on national standards for men's behavioural change programs, healthy masculinities, and early intervention efforts for young men and boys.
- **Work to break cycles of trauma and violence by strengthening support for children and young people exposed to violence** – we will undertake comprehensive work with sector experts to design new initiatives and interventions that can fill the gaps in supports for children and young people. While we're doing this comprehensive work with the sector – we're providing an immediate \$80 million boost to enhance and expand the child-centric trauma informed supports.



- **Act to stop sexual violence and deliver justice for victims of sexual assault** – Labor will work closely with states and territories to respond to the Australian Law Reform Commission's recommendations to reform justice responses to sexual assault – from a report we initiated. We are investing \$21.4 million in initial actions to pilot specialist trauma-informed sexual assault legal services in every state and territory, with Justice System Navigators to support victims and survivors, and support to access restorative justice.
- **Embed safety in Commonwealth systems** – the Albanese Labor Government is auditing and strengthening Commonwealth systems to stamp out opportunities for systems abuse, with an initial focus on child support, taxation and social security systems. As an immediate response to the audit, we will look to stop perpetrators claiming their victims' superannuation after death and consult on changes to tax and social security law so that perpetrators, not victim survivors, are accountable for debts they accrue through financial abuse.

Violence against First Nation's Women and Children

Rates of violence against First Nations women and children are a national shame.

In our first term, Labor invested over \$370 million in initiatives to address violence against First Nations women and children, including funding for culturally-safe and trauma-informed healing support and Family Violence Prevention Legal Service providers.

A re-elected Labor Government will soon deliver the first ever National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety Plan – developed in partnership through shared decision making with First Nations communities.

Supporting economic equality and security.

From day one, women's economic equality has been at the centre of the Albanese Labor Government's economic strategy. We have focussed on deliberate structural reforms to close gender gaps in the workplace and protect women's rights at work and we're already seeing the impact – with women's workforce participation reaching record highs and the gender pay gap falling to record lows.



Here's what we've done for women's economic equality

The Albanese Labor Government has put economic and workplace reforms in place to make sure women can earn more and keep more of what they earn. We've legislated to make workplaces safer and more flexible and we've invested in education and training to give women more choice and opportunity.

In our first term Labor has:

- **Created over half a million new jobs for women** – helping drive women's workforce participation to record highs.
- **Led a national push to close the gender pay gap** – we've made large companies publish their gender pay gaps for the first time and banned pay secrecy clauses. The gender pay gap has dropped to record lows – with women on average earning \$217 more each week than in May 2022.
- **Delivered workplace rules that work for women** – Labor has put gender equality at the centre of the workplace relations system to help women workers achieve fairer wages. We've also made it illegal to be fired for breastfeeding or experiencing family and domestic violence.

- **Supported flexible work and working from home** – We know that flexibility in how we work is a driver of women's workforce participation. Working from home has changed the way we work for the better and helped more women to work full time – boosting their incomes. We've strengthened workers' right to request working from home arrangements with our Secure Jobs, Better Pay laws and introduced a right to disconnect. And we've expanded Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting to include the Australian Public Service.
- **Legislated to improve safety and respect in the workplace** – Labor has implemented all 55 recommendations of Respect@Work – which the Liberal Government voted against – including a new positive duty on employers to protect workers and customers from sexual harassment and assault. Labor also introduced an accessible and low-cost avenue to obtain "stop sexual harassment" orders from the Fair Work Commission.
- **Invested in training and education to open opportunities for women** – we have supported 600,000 Free TAFE places, with women making up more than half of enrolments, and included targets for women apprentices on major government construction and ICT projects through our Australian skills guarantee. And we have reformed how student loans are indexed, wiping \$3 billion from student loans.



And here's what's coming

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- **Work with the private sector to keep closing the gender pay gap** – we will require big businesses with 500 or more employees to set and make progress towards gender equality targets to close their gender pay gaps faster, and we'll work with leaders in the private sector to break down industry gender segregation.
- **Properly value the work women do** – Labor has reformed the Fair Work Act to enable the Fair Work Commission's historic review of undervaluation in five key female dominated awards. As the primary funder of some of these services, the Commonwealth has a key role to play. The Fair Work Commission has just issued its preliminary decision in relation to five priority awards finding gender-based undervaluation in relation to the work of

hundreds of thousands of women. If re-elected Labor will work positively with the Commission to address its findings of gender undervaluation in these awards.

- **Build opportunities for women in a Future Made in Australia** – Labor will make sure that our Future Made in Australia plan delivers better jobs, fairer wages and greater opportunities for women. We are investing in programs to train and support women working in male-dominated industries like construction and clean energy and will drive systemic change to make these sectors safer and more inclusive for women.
- **Maximise the opportunity of flexible work** – Labor will protect flexible work, including working from home. The APS will work to lead the way on flexible working arrangements. And we will work to attract the best people to the Public Service – including women, those with caring responsibilities, older women and those with disability – so the Public Service reflects the community it serves. This is good for the APS and good for women.

Housing as a Foundation for Safety and Security

All Australian women deserve the security of a roof over their head. Affordable housing, home ownership and a roof over your head when you need it are the foundation of economic security and safety for women.

That's why Labor is making it easier to buy and better to rent, and why we're building more homes for Australians. The \$33 billion in Labor housing initiatives over our first term are a central pillar of our work for women and we'll keep building in a second term.

Supporting renters

Labor has worked with states to make renting fairer. As a result, most states have now banned 'no grounds' evictions, limited rent increases to once a year and set minimum rental standards. And we've introduced incentives to create more long-term leases.

We've also delivered back-to-back increases in Rent Assistance, making it 45% higher for a million households.

Making sure women have a safe place to go

Too often, the reason women can't leave a violent relationship is because they have no safe place to go. In our first term, we've increased funding for crisis and transitional accommodation nearly 20-fold. We've:

- Built 33 new women's shelters and we have more to come. We're investing \$100 million in transitional housing projects for women and children fleeing violence and older women at risk of homelessness. And we've provided an extra \$100 million to the Safe Places program, bringing the total number of emergency accommodation places to around 1,500.
- Allocated \$1 billion in funding to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility towards crisis and transitional accommodation.

It's not enough to make sure people have somewhere to go in an emergency – they also need a place to rebuild their lives. That's why we're:

- Investing \$10 billion for the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) – to deliver 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties, including around 4,000 social housing homes for women and children who've experienced family violence. Peter Dutton has said he'll stop the HAFF – cancelling those homes for women who need them.

Women escaping violence will also benefit from the Help to Buy Program, the \$9.3 billion National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness, and 4,000 new social homes through Social Housing Accelerator.

Helping Australian women into home ownership

A re-elected Labor Government will continue the largest housing build in Australian history – building 1.2 million homes in five years and helping more first-time buyers to purchase a home. We will:

- Expand 5% deposits for all first home buyers and people who haven't owned for 10 years – including older women. Expanding the Home Guarantee Scheme will help people get into home owning sooner – so they can pay off their own mortgage, not someone else's. Half of women who lose a house in a divorce don't buy again within 10 years – this change will really help.

- Invest \$10 billion to build 100,000 homes exclusively for first home buyers, with no competition from property investors. Built into the program guidelines with states will be an expectation that women get fair access to these homes – because we know women are underrepresented in many first home buyer programs.
- Deliver 55,000 new social and affordable homes over the next five years – with 28,000 in planning and construction right now.

Helping Australian women with the cost of living.

The world has thrown a lot of challenges at Australia over the past few years and we know cost of living is front of mind for women around the country. The Albanese Labor Government has stepped up to help with the cost of living, while getting inflation down.

Over the past three years, Labor's responsible cost of living relief has helped households in tough times:

- Every single woman taxpayer has received a tax cut as part of Labor's first round of tax cuts – averaging \$1,650 – and 90% of women taxpayers received a bigger tax cut than they would have under the previous Liberal plan.
- We've supported wage rises for low paid workers – who are more likely to be women – and funded wage rises for age care workers and early educators.
- We've provided \$300 in energy bill relief for every household.
- Back-to-back increases in rent assistance – which is now 45% higher than when we came to office.
- Cheaper childcare, cheaper medicines, and free Medicare Urgent Care Clinic visits.
- Inflation is down, wages are up, unemployment is low and interest rates have started to come down.
- New oral contraceptives and menopause treatments on the PBS – saving women hundreds of dollars each year, plus we'll reduce the cost of PBS medicines to \$25 a script.
- Permanent Free TAFE, cutting 20% off all HECS debts and lowering student loan repayments – benefiting Australian women, who hold around 60% of all HECS debt.
- Increased access to housing, particularly for first home buyers and those who have not owned a home in the last decade, with a focus on supply.
- Support for an economically sustainable real wage increase for Australia's award workers.
- Next steps towards universal affordable childcare, including delivering our 3 Day Guarantee to replace the Liberals' unfair Activity Test.

But there's more to do, and a re-elected Labor Government will build on these foundations with:

- New tax cuts for every taxpayer – and a new \$1,000 Instant Tax Deduction.
- Another \$150 off your power bills.

Valuing paid and unpaid caring.

The Albanese Labor Government has made major investments in our first term to help women balance work and care responsibilities, better value unpaid care and support families to more evenly share care. We're expanding paid parental leave and starting work to build a universal childcare system. Our society and economy have long been fuelled by the caring work of women – both paid and unpaid. As that work increasingly moves into the paid economy, we've put reforms and funding in place to make sure it's properly valued and respected.



Here's what we've done to support parents and carers – paid and unpaid

Care – both paid and unpaid – is critical to our community and our economy. In our first term, Labor has focused on supporting parents and carers, and invested in the care economy.

- **Cheaper childcare for over a million families** – families earning \$120,000 a year are on average \$2,700 better off when it comes to child care. We're capping the fees that childcare centres can charge families through our Worker Retention Payment. Since Labor formed Government there are more than 1,100 new services, 41,000 more childcare workers, and around 97,000 more children in early education.
- **Pay rises for early educators and aged care workers** – the Albanese Labor Government has funded 15% wage increases for undervalued – mostly women – workers doing the crucial work of caring for others in aged care and early education. We've also changed workplace laws and established a Care and Community Sector

Expert Panel in the Fair Work Commission to make it easier for undervalued, female-dominated care workers to get pay rises.

- **Supporting parents and carers with paid parental leave** – Labor introduced Australia's first ever government-funded paid parental leave and we will always work to make it stronger. This term we have modernised Paid Parental Leave and are expanding it from 18 weeks to 6 months by 2026. We've also made it more flexible and easier for parents to share care and introduced reserved leave so each parent has guaranteed leave.
- **Ended the punitive ParentsNext program** – and rolled out Parenting Pathways – a voluntary program for vulnerable parents looking for assistance to return to work or study.
- **Released the National Carer Strategy** – to ensure that Australia's unpaid carers are better recognised, respected, valued and supported. The Strategy is accompanied by a three-year action plan to deliver vital additional supports for carers. This includes helping them to participate in the workforce, education or training, and to access appropriate services and supports at a time and in a way that suits their needs, such as funding an additional 10,000 free telephone counselling sessions per year.



And here's what's coming

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- **Take the next steps towards universal childcare** – Labor will keep working to build a universal early education system that's simple, affordable and accessible for every family. Where every child is guaranteed access to at least three days of high-quality education and care. We'll deliver our 3 Day Guarantee – replacing the Liberals' unfair Activity Test – and build more childcare centres where they're needed.
- **Keep strengthening paid parental leave** – from July this year, we'll pay superannuation on government Paid Parental Leave, evaluate our reforms – and we'll keep supporting families, especially dads, to take on more active caring roles. We will also legislate to stop employers cancelling employer paid parental leave after the death of a child.
- **Deliver Commonwealth Prac Payments** – we'll start payments for people doing an unpaid prac as part of their teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work qualifications. These are crucial female dominated sectors, providing essential support to our community, especially women.

Strengthening Medicare for Australian women.

Too often, women's health hasn't been taken seriously – women have been excluded from medical research or have had their symptoms or pain dismissed. Labor is committed to taking women's health seriously as a central part of our work to strengthen Medicare, and invest in the healthcare of all Australians. Labor will always defend Medicare.



Here's what we've done to support women's health

Over our first term, Labor worked to improve women's experiences in the health system by tackling gender bias in diagnosis and treatment. We established the National Women's Health Advisory Council to advise on delivering better health outcomes for women and girls and made significant investments in targeted women's healthcare, supported by cheaper medicines and critical reforms to Medicare.

In our first term Labor has:

- **Opened Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinics in every state and territory** – with 22 clinics across the country. We've also increased the Medicare rebate so women with complex gynaecological conditions like endometriosis can benefit from extended specialist consultations, and funded drugs to treat endometriosis through the PBS.
- **Expanded access to sexual and reproductive health care** – delivered a women's health package informed by the Senate Inquiry into universal access

to reproductive healthcare. And we've increased access to MS-2 Step© by removing several restrictions on health professionals who prescribe and dispense MS-2 Step.

- **Delivered cheaper medicines** – because women should be able to get the medicine they need, without worrying about the cost.
- **Introduced longer general attendance consultations under Medicare** – to improve patient care outcomes by allowing GPs to provide longer consultations when clinically required for things such as cervical screening.
- **Made the first PBS listing for new oral contraceptive pills in more than 30 years**
- **Adding new menopause therapies to the PBS for the first time in over 20 years.**
- **Invested in maternity care and IVF** – improving access to Birthing on Country models for First Nations women and we've also made sure single women and women in same-sex couples can access IVF under Medicare.



And here's what's coming

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- **Deliver an historic investment of over \$790 million to deliver more choice, lower costs and better healthcare for women** which will include –
 - **More choice, lower costs and better access to long-term contraceptives** – establishing 8 LARC Centres of Excellence to train GPs and nurses, and increasing the Medicare rebate for IUDs saving around \$400 in out of pocket costs.
 - **Expanding Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinics** from 22 to 33 with their remit to be expanded to provide specialised menopause care as well.
 - **Improving menopause and perimenopause care** – through the creation of a new Medicare rebate for menopause health assessments, rolling out a national menopause awareness campaign and funding to train health professionals.
 - **Trialling treatment for uncomplicated UTIs and more access to oral contraceptives** directly from pharmacists.

- **Strengthen Medicare with the biggest investment in bulk-billing ever** – so more Australians can see a doctor for free. We'll also open 50 more Medicare Urgent Care Clinics so 4 in 5 Australians will live within 20 minutes of an Urgent Care Clinic.
- **Make a \$1 billion investment for more free, public mental health services** – this will include 31 new and upgraded Medicare Mental Health Centres, new and expanded headspace services and 20 Youth Specialist Care Centres, as well as funding for more than 1,200 training places for mental health professionals, GPs and peer workers. We will also invest \$16.7 million to open another eight Perinatal Mental Health Clinics totalling twenty around the country, run by the Gidget Foundation Australia.

Women's representation, leadership and decision-making.

It matters who gets to sit around the decision-making table. When we have more women at the table and the people in our Parliament better reflect our communities, we can deliver better outcomes for everyone – helping us navigate challenges from climate change to global economic shifts.

Labor has a long-standing commitment to supporting women's representation. The Albanese Labor Government is the first Commonwealth Government with a majority of women in Australia's history and we've appointed the first gender equal Cabinet. We've also reached the highest representation ever of women on Government boards and decision-making bodies.

To achieve gender equality in Australia, more women – including First Nations women and women from diverse backgrounds – must be represented in decision-making, policy design, leadership and public life.



Here's what we've done for women's decision making and leadership

In our first term Labor has:

- **Delivered Working for Women – Australia's first ever gender equality strategy**, to drive efforts over the next decade towards achieving gender equality. At its heart, Working for Women recognises that women's experiences and lives are diverse and considers the intersecting forms of inequality that women across Australia face. And it commits to working across multiple fronts to shift the dial on gender equality in Australia.

- **Put gender analysis at the centre of government decision-making** – introducing gender responsive budgeting and delivering four Women's Budget Statements to show how Budget decisions impact Australian women. We've also strengthened the role of the Office for Women at the centre of government and strengthened the role of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as a respected source of data and analysis on gender equality at work.
- **Listened to women's voices** – boosting support for the National Women's Alliances to help us understand the challenges experienced by women all over the country and to drive progress on gender equality. We've also established the new Lived Experience Advisory Council within the



Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission to amplify the voices of people with lived experience to inform policy to end gender-based violence.

- **Supported Australian women and girls in sport** – with a new National Sport Strategy promoting participation and safety, the \$200 million Play Our Way program to address barriers faced by women and girls in sport, and a focus on women's representation on sport governance bodies.
- **Launched a new international gender equality strategy** – to guide our efforts to advance the human rights of women and girls around the world.



And here's what's coming

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- **Continue to put approaches that recognise the diversity of women's intersecting experiences at the heart of our efforts to achieve gender equality.**
- **Embed gender responsive budgeting in government decision making processes.**
- **Provide more support for women and girls' participation in coaching, officiating and sports administration.**
- **Support women-led businesses** – Labor will establish a voluntary register for women-owned and led businesses tendering for government work. The register will be public and searchable, giving government buyers the ability to identify businesses.
- **Strengthen compliance with procurement rules** which make sure the Government is only working with companies that meet Workplace Gender Equality Agency requirements.